



Living Lab Network

Youth Eco-Stewardship

Program

2024 Report

Living Lab is a community-school-campus partnership supporting land-based learning/healing, eco-cultural restoration and Indigenous resurgence.

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Highlights of Summer 2024



Living Lab held its first-ever March Break camps with Lekwungen youth. Over two weeks, 18 youths explored Lekwungen, WSÁNEĆ and regional lands and beaches. Activities included ecosystem restoration at SNIDÇEŁ, harvesting 50 pounds of clams at Bamberton, fishing at the Breakwater, cooked and catered a community feast and visited the Royal BC Museum and IMAX.

CAMP

The summer camp concluded with a community feast cooked by the youth, celebrating the fantastic summer experiences with 80 family members from the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.



BOTTOM: Youth on the water, exploring the vibrant waters of Tl'ches (Discovery Island Marine Park)



Looking Ahead



The Eco-Youth Program has been running for seven years, with hundreds of youth participating, many of whom have returned for several consecutive years. The Living Lab Network remains committed to this vital work: providing spaces, opportunities, and adventures for local Indigenous youth and future generations to reconnect with their homelands while fostering personal, community, and ecosystem well-being. In the coming winter, we will engage with youth, parents, communities, and partners to plan the following steps, connecting the program to education and employment goals.

“ Youth likes ”

“I liked going canoeing and travelling's to new areas.”

Salish Sea- ƧƧƧƧƧƧ
Boat Trips

Art
Skywalk

Salt spring day trip
Making food for the nation -> feasts

Elders speaking

Youth together

Crabbing

Weaving



Keep an eye out for the Insect guide!

“For us, the foundation for caring about climate change and wanting to protect our living heritage IS reconnecting to our homelands. We are recovering the practices of our ancestors who stewarded the lands and waters since time immemorial. We want to serve our communities while gaining meaningful, related employment skills tied to environmental protection and community- ecosystem wellness.”



**Jess Joseph, Songhees Nation
LLab Arts & Community Engagement
Coordinator**

Thanks to the Songhees and Esquimalt Education Department staff Kalie Dyer, Maya Hamel and Erin Glasgow for their support. Plans are underway for linking the youth program to school and employment goals, having seasonal outings and more food, fun, arts, cooking and camping!

The Eco-Stewardship Youth Camps program started in the summer of 2017 between the Songhees and the University of Victoria. Since its inception, it has grown to include the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Pauquchin Nations, PEPÁKEN HÁUTW Foundation, the W SÁNEĆ School Board, School District #61 Indigenous Education, Parks Canada, Science Venture, Camosun College and many other communities and NGO partners. Our Eco-Stewardship Youth Camps program supports local Indigenous youth to restore and maintain the environment and traditional food systems through outdoor, creative, and “fun science” activities. We also aim to establish and strengthen all generations' bonds, grow friendships, and recover ancestral connections to local Indigenous community histories, languages, lands and waters.



OUR GOALS

Educational Transformation

Develop land-based learning and school programs connecting sustainability and environmental/science education with student well-being and success.

Restoration and Resurgence

Organize community-driven ecosystem and climate action projects which affirm Indigenous knowledge, rights, and access to/use of traditional lands and waters.

Community -Driven Research

Lead and support community-driven research projects based on Indigenous and community knowledge and priorities, healing and wellness, and restoring the connection to lands and waters.

Capacity Building and Engagement

Create community skills, capacity-building activities, and a regional Indigenous eco-stewardship program focused on children and youth.

OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS



Songhees

Aboriginal Service Plan
Ministry of Advanced
Education



**University
of Victoria**



SD 61 Indigenous
Education Department



Office of Indigenous Academic
and Community Engagement
(UVIC)



TETÁCES
Restoration
Initiative



**WSÁNEĆ
SCHOOL BOARD**



Parks Canada
Parcs Canada



**NSERC
CRSNG**



THE LAW
FOUNDATION
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



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